THE

HERALD OF TRUTH.

And HE that sat upon the throne said, "BEHOLD I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW." Rev. xxi 5.

VOL. I. APRIL 20, 1826. No. 25.

FOR THE HERALD OF TRUTH.

—

Truth, and the love of it, for its own sake.

—

What is truth? A weighty question this: once emphatically put to Him who was best able to give us information on the subject, but not answered. Truth may, perhaps, be defined to be *the form of what is.* By form is here meant that in which the quality of a thing is displayed, and by which its existence is apprehended. The order, then, according to which things exist, is truth. You will instantly perceive that this definition is more comprehensive than the general acceptation of the term. Yet, it is imagined, you will on reflection, find, that when properly understood, this embraces every other idea of truth. But we design not to enter deeply into the subject.

Truth, then, not merely confined to verbal propositions takes within its scope the universe. Whatever the creative hand of Omnipotence has shaped, is manifested by truth—that manifestation is truth. It is, in a word, the robe of essential life—the form of Deity: for the Deity is essential existence and from him exists all that does exist.

How important is truth! The form of Deity! It is then the expression of his quality—it is that by which his existence is apprehended. The form of Deity! We cannot then know him, unless we see it; we cannot be conjoined to him, unless we, in our degree comprehend and embrace it. But how shall we be happy, if we do not know, and are not conjoined to, the source of life and blessedness? We manifestly cannot. If, therefore, we know not, apprehend not, embrace not the truth, we are *wretched.* Is not truth, then, important?

Again: look within you. Do you not there see a will and understanding? A faculty of thinking and of acting? And has not that faculty of thinking the power of discerning the realities and apprehending the existence of things? Our understanding then is capable of discerning and receiving truth. Nay it could not exist without it: for, without truth, we could not have an object of thought; and without objects of thought, there could not be the power of thinking.—Nay, farther, without objects of thought, our *will* would be unoperative: for our desires would have nothing to take hold upon—they would therefore cease to exist—our power of willing would thus be gone, and we should be non-entities. Snrely, then, truth *is important.*

We will not stop to point out the sources of error. Let it suffice to say there *are* sources of error. One thing, under this head, however, we cannot refrain from mentioning, viz *all error* is *apparent truth.*—That this is so, will appear manifest, if you reflect for a moment. The sophist, who wishes to deceive you, does not try to convince you that his proposition is erroneons, but endeavors to make it appear true.—The villain who would wrong you invariably puts on the cloak of honesty and fair pretensions. This is illustrated by many very familiar examples in the material world: as the sun appears to rise and set, the earth appears to be a vast plain, &c. Further there is universally in the human breast, an innate regard for truth. We will not undertake to account for this: it is an ultimate fact. We ourselves do not doubt, that it is the immediate and constant work of divine agency.—There is we repeat, an innate regard for truth: for no one will assent to what is false, knowing it to be so, until his natural powers are vitiated. But if this is the case, how comes it that many men, nay all men, in a greater or less degree, are in error? This could not be unless they embraced error as if it were truth. All error, then is apparent truth. A momentous consideration: for it both strengthens the conviction that there is such a thing as truth, and proves its value: and it shows us the great necessity of anxiety, caution, diligence and discrimination in seeking the truth.

The fact is, we see truth not as it is in itself. but according to our own state. This might be abundantly proved; but needlessly—for you will grant it on the slightest reflection. Hence, since the conformation of men's minds is as various as that of their faces, no two individuals see a truth in precisely the same aspect. It is as if we were all looking at natural objects through spectacles variously coloured. Each one perceives those objects according to the medium through which he beholds them. Whatever, then, modifies our state, affects our views of truth. And it is evident that our views of truth will be more or less clear, according as we are more or less under influences which bring us into a state that is opposed to the truth.

If then, truth is so important as has been represented—if it is in a sense, the arbiter of our present and eternal happiness—if the exer-

cise of our mental faculties, and our very existence as rational beings depend upon our knowing and embracing it—surely we are bound, by every consideration of policy and propriety, with our whole soul to seek the truth, and to make the seeking and the doing it the business of our lives. And if there are numerous sources of error—if error is always clad in the garb of truth—and if our apprehensions of truth are always modified by the peculiar state of our own minds: then certainly it becomes us to be ever solicitous and watchful in our investigations, and ever careful to induce in our minds that state which is favourable to the apprehension and reception of truth.

But what, reader, is the state of the mind which is most favourable for the attainment of the above end? Manifestly that in which it is most conformed to the truth. But when is the mind likely to be most conformed to the truth? Truly when we seek it for its own sake and regulate our life by it. And this will be the case when we *love* it for its own sake. For what a man loves he desires; and what he desires, he thinks of—this is ever present to his mind, and influences his conduct. If now a man seeks the truth from self-love, or from love of honour, distinction, or emolument, or from the pride of victory, or with a view to the ostentatious display of acute penetration and superior abilities; it is plain that his judgment will be liable to be warped whenever the truth runs counter to his ruling propensities, and that he will be ever prone to make it bend to suit his purposes. But when a man loves the truth solely because it is truth—because it is the order which infinite wisdom has ordained in the constitution of things,—because it is the order of heaven, because it is that, a conformity to which fits the soul for eternal blessedness; and when he regulates his conduct according to its dictates; then he will have no desire to bend the truth to suit his purposes, for it will be his chief purpose to conform himself in all respects to its requisitions: then he will be in the best possible state to clearly perceive and readily embrace the truth, and will be in the fairest way to attain the legitimate end of his creation.

How apt are we, in the busy scenes of active exertion, to forget that we are immortal! How apt to forget that every exercise of our powers, every voluntary thought of our minds, every indulged desire of our hearts, every act of our lives, is a tissue woven into the texture of our souls and will do its part to determine the quality of our character, as it is unrolled before the eyes of men, and in the sight of angels! In the world of mind, as in that of matter, there is no such thing as a vacuum. If what is good and useful does not occupy our thoughts, that which is evil and frivolous will. And the aggregate of our thoughts must determine our quality and our destiny. On this consideration alone would we argue, upon our young reader especially, the importance of an attention to this subject. Every question that comes up before the mind, or in discussion, has a right side and a wrong.—From the pride of talent, for the display of ingenuity, for the tempo-

rary pleasure of a petty triumph, you may maintain the wrong side and exultingly foil the advocate of the truth: but what will it avail you? The ephemeral excitement is soon over, the pleasure is as evanescent as the hues on a bubble! But not so the effects. A positive influence is exerted on the mind which no time can alter, no power efface: for it will ever exclude the influence of the opposite course which might have at that time been taken. And paltry indeed is the momentary satisfaction of triumph over an antagonist, when it is purchased at the expense of an eternal flaw in the mirror of the soul! Habits of this kind may make you an adept in chicanery but they will never fit you for usefulness in life, for honour to yourself, ornament to society, profit to your country, glory to your God! Truth is the only proper aliment of an immortal soul! Truth, the only sure safeguard of a nation's prosperity! Truth, the only solid base of human happiness! Truth, the firm foundation on which heaven rests. You are now at a period of life when your youthful faculties are maturing to manhood, and your moral character is forming: and you will soon enter the arcana of public life, when the nerve of your mental energies will be needed to defend your country's rights, to secure your country's welfare, to maintain the cause of man, the cause of virtue, the cause of truth and righteousness.—Your own felicity then urges you, your country beckons you, the finger of God points you to the pathway of truth and unwavering rectitude. By your own best interests then, by your country's weal, for the sake of man, for the sake of heaven, we intreat you to seek, and learn to love the truth for its own sake.

MENTOR.

FOR THE HERALD OF TRUTH.

Mr. Editor—

Some time since I observed in the Herald a set of propositions presented by a person signing himself "Querist," for proof. I looked with interest for the answers to his inquiries. I have read them, but am constrained to say that I am not satisfied. I did intend to investigate for myself each of those positions; but I have been prevented by the peculiar and engrossing nature of my daily avocations, and by not having in my possession the works of Swedenborg. This intention I have not yet renounced; and trust in Providence that more propitious circumstances will ere long enable me to carry it into act.

I am free to confess that my doctrinal views of religion are not yet fixed. But if the deceitfulness of the human heart has not deceived me, I am a sincere seeker of the truth; and am resolved to embrace and acknowledge it wherever it is found. I have read a little in the works of Swedenborg—have heard more by preaching and conversation—and am favourably impressed by some of his doctrines. I would

fain be convinced of the truth of his whole system; persuaded as I am, that, whatever may be his pretentions to a divine commission, certain of his principles are calculated in a higher degree than any others which have come to my knowledge, to exalt, purify, and bless the human character.

However, although I have not yet been able to make up my mind as to the truth of what is termed the new dispensation—equally free am I to confess that neither am I convinced of the truth of those doctrines, into the acknowledgment of which I was early initiated by baptism and under the influence of which I have been brought up. I must say that I have believed those doctrines merely because my parents or my instructors told me they were true, without a rational conviction of their truth. Nor, since I have approached the years of maturity have I been wanting in endeavors to obtain this rational conviction: but hitherto in vain. If the doctrines of the old church are true, far am I from wishing to renounce them. The bonds of kindred and friendship bind me to her by the tenderest ties. All my influence and consequence in life would seem to depend upon a connexion with her. So that, if I could be convinced of the truth of her doctrines, gladly would I embrace and maintain them. Hence I am inclined to assign to "Querist" a task similar to that which he so readily imposes on you, with a rational demonstration of some of the primary doctrines of the old church. He will surely not flinch from the task, as he would hardly require from you what he is not on his part prepared and willing to give.

And first let me ask him. How do you prove from scripture and from reason that the Deity has neither "body, parts or passions," and though absolutely *one* yet that he consists of *three persons*, each of which is "very God of very God?"

2. How do you prove that the scriptures are in their literal sense divine, and particularly the Revelations of St. John?

3. How do you prove that God made all things out of nothing?

4. How do you prove that our material body, when it shall have mingled by decomposition with the earth and its elements: or, by being eaten, shall have gone into the conformation of fishes, birds or beasts, will be raised up the identical body that it was when it died? And when you have proved this, please to show what need the soul will have of a material body in a purely spiritual existence. Or, if you suppose that this material body is transmuted to a spiritual body be so kind as to inform me what need that spirit whom John saw in vision, and who assured him that he was one of his brethren the prophets, and who consequently must have existed in that state in which he was seen, and in that form or body by which he was manifested, at least some time since his death in this world, and previous to the anticipated general resurrection—be so kind, I say as to inform me what need this spirit will then have of another spiritual body derived from material elements? Or prove from reason or scripture that a material body can or will be transmuted to a spiritual body.

These are by no means all the propositions which I wish to bring forward for proof, but they will suffice for the present.

Besides the references which I have to my own conviction, Mr. Editor, I am induced to advance these and other propositions, that your Querist may be led to scrutinize more thoroughly the ground on which he stands: and that your readers generally may see that the advocates of the theological dogmas of the day (which may appear incontrovertible because sanctioned by almost immemorial precedent) would, if they were now first called on to promulgate them, find it quite as difficult to substantiate them by rational arguments as it is for the believers in the new dispensation to *force* conviction of the truth of their tenets upon the prejudiced and reluctant minds of those who are fondly attached to long established systems.

Mankind are strangely prone to take things for granted in religion. Early imbued with the persuasion that certain things are true, they grow up with this persuasion, and seldom or never investigate for themselves the grounds of their belief. What they have heard from their childhood—what their fathers believed before them—what the christian world in general acknowledges, they are satisfied must be true.—To whatever is in conformity with these views, or with the prevailing sentiments of mankind, they are ready enough to yield their assent.—But if any one presumes to doubt the validity of their doctrines and to advance something which is contrary to their preconceived opinions, they instantly set themselves to the defence of their own systems, without candidly investigating the merits of the new: and taking what they have been taught in childhood, or what has been handed down from age to age, as established positions, they go on reasoning very conclusively to their own minds, without once imagining these their premises may possibly be controverted. Now, Mr. Editor, it appears to me as incumbent on the supporters of the old system, when called upon to demonstrate the grounds of their belief, as it is for you to prove yours. The day has gone by when men were to take things on priestly dictation. We may yield a blind assent to any thing, but we cannot have a clear and an abiding belief of a truth of which we are not rationally convinced

Let not then your Querist, in reply to my first question, put me off, like every other old churchman with whom I have conversed on that topic with the cry of mystery, mystery! For with heartfelt joy I find, that, however mysterious this subject may appear in the Old Church, it is no longer shrouded with such darkness in the New.—Besides, *tacitum tanquam myeterium, tenere, aliquid*, does not evince its truth: or it may prove any proposition, however absurd; and may be an argument as cogent in confirming the preposterous tenets of the Mahomitan or Hindoo as those of the christian. Neither let him tell me about the weakness of human reason: for if we cannot rationally conceive of the existence and true nature of God, we are neither bound nor capacitated to worship him. I am aware that though ever so highly

enlightened human reason cannot see the Deity as he is in his essence, that it cannot grasp the infinite and eternal in all his immensity; yet we may and must have right notions of his existence. It is true that in his essence he far transcends our finite faculties. yet, in the modes of his existence or in his glorious attributes, he never can be *repugnant* to that very faculty by which he has peculiarly distinguished us, and with which he himself has gifted us for the express purpose of enabling us to apprehend his existence. But, as respects the doctrine in question, the difficulty with me is not that it is *above* reason, but that it is *contrary* to reason.

I would be glad to make other remarks, on this and the other topics, further explanatory of the difficulties presented to my mind; but I fear that I should fatigue you with my prolixity.

VIRIDIS.

Explanations.

Rev. xi. verses 5, 6. "*And if any one shall be willing to hurt them, fire shall go forth out of their mouth, and shall devour their enemies; and if any one shall be willing to hurt them, he must thus be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain no rain in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague as often as they will.*" And if any one shall be willing to hurt them, signifies the defence of them by the Lord, lest they should in any wise be injured: fire shall go forth out of their mouth, and shall devour their enemies, signifies, that they who would bring hurt upon them, shall fall into evils and falses which are from hell, and which will destroy them: and if any one shall be willing to hurt them, thus he must be killed, signifies that according to their endeavor to bring evil upon them they perish: these have power to shut heaven that it rain no rain in the days of their prophecy, signifies, that they who reject the goods and truths of heaven and the church, which proceed from the Lord, do not receive any influx from heaven: and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, signifies, that truths with them are turned into falses of evil: and to smite the earth with every plague, signifies, that the church with such perisheth by the concupiscences of evil: as often as they will, signifies, as often as man assaults the goods of love and truths of doctrine which witness concerning the Lord, and from which man acknowledgeth and confesseth the Lord, to bring evil upon them.

Verses 7, 8. "*And when they have finished their testimony, the beast ascending out of the abyss shall make war with them, and shall conquer them, and kill them. And their bodies* [*shall lie*] *upon the street of the*

great city, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." And when they shall have finished their testimony, signifies, in the end of the church, when the divine [principle] of the Lord is no longer acknowledged and thence there is no longer any good of love and truth of doctrine: the beast ascending out of the abyss shall make war with them, signifies assault from infernal loves: and shall conquer them and kill them, signifies the consequent destruction of all the good and truth of the church: and their bodies [shall lie] upon the street of the great city, signifies the extinction thereof from evils and falses of doctrine: which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, signifies, by the evils of the love of self, and by falses thence derived: where also our Lord was crucified, signifies, by which, namely, evils and falses thence derived originating in infernal love, the Lord was rejected and condemned.

Matthew vi. 10. "*Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, as in heaven, so also in the earth,*" that by kingdom is there understood the reception of divine good and divine truth which proceed from the Lord, and in which the Lord is with the angels of heaven and with men of the church, is evident, for it follows, Thy will be done, as in heaven so also in the earth, and the will of God is done when those things are received in the heart and soul, that is in love and faith. So in another place; "*Seek ye first the kingdom of the heavens and the justice thereof, and all things shall be added to you,*" Matt. vi. 33: by the kingdom of the heavens, in the spiritual sense, is understood the divine truth, and by justice, the divine good, wherefore it is said, seek first the kingdom of the heavens and the justice thereof; and, in the supreme sense, by the kingdom of the heavens is understood the Lord, inasmuch as He is the all of His kingdom, and by justice, in the same sense, is signified the merit of the Lord; and whereas man, who is ruled by the Lord, wills and loves only such things as are of the Lord, he is led unknown to himself to the felicities of eternity, therefore it is said, that all things shall be added to him, whereby is understood, that all things shall happen for salvation according to his wishes. Inasmuch as heaven is heaven from the reception of divine truth from the Lord, and in like manner the church, therefore heaven and the church are understood in the general sense by the kingdom of God, and by the kingdom of the heavens: hence they who receive divine truth, are called by the Lord the sons of the kingdom, in Matthew; "*The field is the world, the seeds are the sons of the kingdom, the tares are the sons of the evil one,*" xiii. 38: that they who receive divine truth are understood by the sons of the kingdom is evident, for it is said, the seed are the sons of the kingdom, and the tares are the sons of the evil one, and by seed is meant divine truth, and by tares the infernal false, and they are called sons, because sons, in the spiritual sense of the word, signify truths, and, in the opposite sense, falses. Moreover, that the kingdom of God signifies the church as to truths from good, and also heaven; and that the kingdom of God with man, signifies to

be in truths from good from the Lord, consequently to be in wisdom, and thence in the power of resisting falses and evils, and thus that to reign is of the Lord alone.

Verses 7, 8. "*And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels fought with the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels. And they prevailed not, and their place was not found any more in heaven.*" And there was war in heaven signifies combat of the false against truth, and of truth against the false: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels, signifies combat amongst those who are in the favor of the life of love and charity, and who are in favor of the divine principle of the Lord in His Human: and they prevailed not, and their place was not found any more in heaven, signifies they yielded, and that no where in the heavens hereafter is there given a place, corresponding to the state of their life, which is a state of thought alone, and of no affection of good and truth.

FROM THE AURORA.

The spirit of the Lord's true Church not Sectarian.

It has been the fault of superficial minds, and of narrow and short-sighted men, to run down what they do not understand, and to palm *bigotry* upon the world, instead of an *open*, *free*, and *liberal* spirit.—Where this has been the governing spirit of a church, it has always done mischief, and engrossed to itself what lay open to all others; and accordingly sects and parties have been formed, and there was no help for it; the engrossing spirit occasioned it. A church is the world new-made, so to speak, and formed for and by the Lord. It must not then be treated in such a manner as to cause it to rebel, refuse, and shrink from such a form and improvement, and from a waste or forest to become a garden inclosed. And yet this was the case with the *Christian* church, to go no further back. She was almost strangled in her birth, being taken out of the world from among the Gentiles. Its first members were treated roughly, and called a *sect*, by the narrow spirit that actuated the Jews. Had they only meant it as a term of distinction, and not of reproach, it would have had no ill meaning, nor bad effect; but their monopolizing minds understood it otherwise, and they were called *the sect of the Nazarenes* in a bad sense, and every where spoken against.

And how has this spirit prevailed ever since, even in the Christian Church itself! From the undue love of power, and the lust of dominion, the heathen Emperors ill-treated the Jews for differing from them in their religious rites and worship; the Jews in their turn, and on the

same account, joined with the heathen in persecuting the Christians; and the Christians, when they took the lead, fell into the same spirit, and persecuted one another.

This was glaringly the case with *Rome Christian* as she is called.—Though she took to herself the *name* of the *Catholic Church*, and still glories in the term, yet she is not so in *spirit;* she is narrow and contracted, taking none into her bosom that do not think as she does: nay, undertaking to say, they are *without the pale of the Christian Church*, because they are not *within the pale of her own*, treating them accordingly, and will, she says, be treated as outcasts by the Lord. This is *Sectarianism*, not *Catholicism;* on which account many protested against her, and have been called Protestants ever since. These, Berœan-like, were actuated by a nobler spirit, and a greater degree of Christian liberty; but as descendants of a narrow-minded church, they inherited much of this spirit of it for a while but suffering from it, and thinking better, and more wisely of the matter, they at length admitted an *act of toleration*, which was of infinite service to the church, and cultivated a more excellent spirit than for some time had breathed in her. *The tolerated* in time divided into a variety of sects, and formed different parties; and while *charity* is the ruling principle in them all, and they keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, it is not properly sectarianism, nor should such be reproached with heresy, or schism, so long as their tempers and lives are right. For the church of God, says an able Scribe, "Inasmuch as it derives its doctrinals from the literal sense of the Word, will differ in every different place; and this is not only according to societies in general, but sometimes according to particular persons in each society; nevertheless, a difference in doctrinals of faith is no reason why the church should not be *one*, provided only there be *unanimity* as to willing what is good, and doing what is good." Such are men's propriums, or natural turns of mind; such are the prejudices of their education, connections, and situations, and their different capacities, that it is next to impossible all should think alike, even in religious matters; nor is it of hurtful consequence, while men speak the truth in love, and can give the rights of judgment, as well as take it; but where this right is invaded, and men will think and judge for others, saying wisdom is with us, and we are the men, and all must bow down to our image or endure a fiery furnace, this is Sectarianism, and should be checked and not indulged.

Some are so deep in this spirit, that if others cannot unite with them in it, or frame to say *Shibboleth*, they must be slain, and not suffered to pass over Jordan. Orthodoxy and heterodoxy are to be substituted in the room of love and forbearance, and made terms of reproach, or otherwise, as those who use them shall see meet. This has at all times been attended with mischief and sorrow, and proved the desolation and dissolution of the true church of God, whenever it has been given into.

Where men can agree to differ, to embrace one another in the life and love principle, and to dissent, if they must, without acrimony and disgust, falling in with the good they meet with in another; this is acceptable to God, and well pleasing to men; and tends more to the welfare and edification of his church than all the bickerings and contentions of warm and fallible minds. Men need not have differed so much, nor stood so far apart from one another as they have done, if they had loved more and disputed less; but till the Lord could bring his best church forth to view, there has always been something left in every other, which gradually preyed upon it, weakened, and caused its decline, and at length eat out its vitals; but this, from its promising appearance, is likely to heal all breaches, for she is catholic in her love, forbearing in her spirit, condemns none rashly, but accommodates herself to the weakness and simplicity of all past churches; and with the utmost tenderness, though with all proper assurance, she brings forth her better and more perfect view of things; exalting the Saviour more, his doctrines more clearly and fully, and a life of obedience, in its most excellent and amiable form, calculated for the good of all parties, but confined to none; the very reverse of Sectarianism. While that narrows the mind, and confines its regards to itself too much, this expands and enlarges the heart, and knows no other bounds and limits to the exercise of its love, than those of the universe.

I do not say all who have had a sight of her, and been taken with her charms and excellencies, are thus minded; they have, perhaps, brought too much of themselves into her; for there are, and will be those, especially at first, who are not thus enobled yet, but this is not her fault, nor her character. And there also are, and will be those, who from the short-sightedness of their own views, and from the bias, they are naturally under from them, will, as strangers, enquire after her in their own light, as though she were a new upstart sect only, and like other sectaries confined in their views and regards. But this is not her spirit; her truths lie open to all, her gates are shut against none. She distinguishes, indeed between the good and the evil in every one; between true and false charity, and between real and apparent truth; but she invites all to partake in her blessings, and like her blessed founder, excludes none from her happiness and glory but such as exclude themselves. It is a slander upon her to think her *sectarian*. Better acquaintance with her truths and doctrines would remove it. To wish and desire that all may be saved; or to suppose the Lord loves all men well enough to save them, if they are not wanting to themselves, is called by some false love and charity, and is what they cannot away with; but it is because they are straitened in their own bowels, and are too selfish in their views and spirit.

Some, in their own spirit, scruple not to set up altar against altar, for mere difference of sentiment and opinion, and frequently anathematize one another on this account, crying others down as much as they cry themselves up: but this is far from her; so long as she can

join herself with good in any, she does, and does not separate by reason of lesser differences. She would worship the way she most approves, but condemns not those who cannot worship with her till they see, and can believe, as she does. She contends for *primogeniture*, and cannot sell her *birth-right;* but despises none of her younger brethren. Though *last in appearance*, she was *first in design*, and this she maintains and stands up for, forbearing others in love. The *sectarian* spirit is sharp and cutting, and is more in the mustard-seed state of the kingdom than any higher; it is biting and pungent. Not so the spirit of the New and True Church. If it smites, it is with friendliness; if she kills it is with kindness. She can see and acknowledge her friends out of the walls of her house; and many there are in her *spirit*, who are not yet in her *truths* and *doctrines*. Heaven has its varieties, and is made up of different societies; but *love* is the grand catholicon that cements and harmonizes them all. *Sectarianism* does not consist in *externals* so much as *internals;* as it is not the *shape*, the *size*, the *stature* of a man that denominates him such, so much as his *spirit*, and *disposition*. The Jews, though selected by the Lord, and distinguished from all other nations, mistook the design of that choice, and grew selfish and sectarian upon it. It was for the *general* good they were chosen, and not merely on their *own account*. Sectarianism then must be an evil, and can have no place in heaven. The sooner it is banished from earth, the sooner will the best church appear. The Lord had twelve disciples, who were his constant attendants and companions; but John is called the beloved one. He was not a sectarian on this account, nor the rest the worse for his being so beloved. Indeed they were so united as to form his ecclesiastical body; and Peter, James, and John, are usually mentioned together, as representing the very essence of his church, faith, charity, and good works. Where these are in unison sectarianism is banished, let the church, or the person, be named what they may. *Mens cujusque, is est quisque*, even a heathen could say. The mind is the man, externals are but his shade. What more then need be said in favor of *Catholicism*, or more assimilate and liken us to the Lord? If real heretics and schismatics shelter themselves under the benign influences of this lovely name, shall the noble spirit itself be rejected on this account, and by reason of this abuse of it? A better reasoner could say, "Heresies themselves do not hurt, but confirmations of the falsities contained in them by misapplication of the Word, and reasonings that originate in the natural man, together with an evil life; these are the things which do hurt."

A mind then, open and free to all enquiry, so it hold fast that which is good, is a great blessing from the Lord, and what has his warrant and suffrage, and should be cherished and encouraged by us as the spirit of his true church, and agreeable to his own mind and will.

Slave to no sect, who takes no private road,
But looks through Nature, up to Nature's God

I remain your's, &c. P.

ORIGIN OF IDOLATRY.

There was a time, when the human race were in that state of innocence and purity, and consequently in that state of light and knowledge, that every thing which their eyes beheld, could yield them a lesson of heavenly wisdom. The trees, the rivers, the mountains were full of instruction. The fowls of the air could teach them perceptions of truth and the beasts of the field affections of good. Their attention was constantly led from the body to the soul—from matter to spirit, from earth to heaven—and from nature up to nature's God. The inhabitants of this world, in some degree resembled at that time the inhabitants of Heaven. Love God above all things, and thy neighbour as thyself, were in essence the laws of the Land. No wars, contentions or quarrels, were known to society. Indictments, litigations or persecutions had neither name or existence. Life and property were always secure, for there was none to molest or make afraid. No poisonous reptiles, savage beasts, or savage men had yet appeared on earth. And long after that period, sickness with all its horrid train of disorders, commenced its destructive operations. But even in these happy days it was necessary for the complete enjoyment of happiness that people should leave this world of matter and launch into a world of spirit, but without pain and without suffering, they could put off their bodies like a garment; yea they could lie quietly down to sleep and awake with rapture in heaven.

And even unto this time would mankind have continued in this happy situation had it not been for the intervention of sin. Yes it was sin, that detestable monster that has brought all the miseries upon the human race that they ever have or ever will suffer in time or eternity.—As soon as man began to decline from his pristine purity, his clear and distinct perceptions of heavenly truth and heavenly good began gradually to fade from before his eyes. External objects no longer brought internal principles to view, no longer could he look through the world of matter into the world of spirit, but all was darkness, uncertainty and confusion.

Their fathers had made images of gold, of silver, of wood and stone, not as objects of worship but as representatives of the love, wisdom, the goodness and the mercy of God. Whenever they cast their eyes upon these images, their thoughts and affections were immediately raised to their heavenly Father, in whom alone were to be found those divine attributes. Such was the design and such the effect; but in process of time, their posterity lost sight of the representative sense of these images, the only use for which their fathers intended them. Their mental vision was closed,—the world of spirit vanished from their sight and was considered as a fable, the natural world gained.

all their attention. They were no longer under the influences of the spiritual man but became entirely subject to the natural man. The heavenly principles that actuated their fathers, had no influence over them.—They could not conceive of a God who was a spirit and whom they could not behold with their bodily eyes. And now it was that they began to worship as Gods the images that their fathers had left. This is the true origin of idolatry, or image worship, which has been handed down from generation to generation and which in many parts of the world continues even unto this time. Some indeed, there have been in all ages who were too enlightened to worship images the work of men's hands, yet not conceiving of an invisible God, they would worship the Sun or Moon, or any other visible object that to them appeared most suitable or proper. Among the heathen nations, thousands, nay millions of such idolators may be found. But let us not believe for a moment that such are the only idolators in the world. Happy indeed would it be if this was the case. But in the civilized world and even amongst professing christians innumerable idolaters may daily be seen. It is the duty and ought to be the delight of every human being to love supremely and worship the great Jehovah, manifested in the person of Jesus Christ, and who is the only God of heaven and earth. For he is the only being worthy of adoration and the only true object of worship. It follows therefore, that to worship any thing else, or which is the same thing, to love it supremely, is as really and truly idolatry as it is like the heathen to bow down to images, stocks, or stones. Every human being has his supreme affection, and this affection is placed upon some object, and if this object is not the right object, then is he guilty of idolatry. If there is a man who loves supremely the honors of the world and thirsts and pants for fame, then is fame his idol, and the God he has chosen is as volatile and fluctuating as the wind or the whirlwind which the untutored savage adores and fears. If there is a man who loves supremely the riches of the world, then riches are his idol, and it is no more criminal to worship gold in the form of an image, than in the shape of guineas or eagles.

Is there a man who loves supremely the pleasures of sense and the gratification of his carnal appetites, then these are his idols. And he is more criminal than the poor barbarians who bow before the poisonous reptile and venemous serpent; because they worship from fear, but he from love. Is there a man who regardless of the happiness and prosperity of all around him, loves himself and himself alone, then is self his idol, and of all idolaters in creation the worshiper of self is the most detestable and mean. Indeed compared with him, the poor pagan who worships the sun and moon appears rational and wise.

ON THE TRIAL OF FAITH AND FRIENDSHIP.

Faith and friendship are seldom truly tried but by extremes. To find friends when we have no need of them, and to want them when we have, are both alike easy and common. When we are happy in the spring tide of abundance, and the rising flood of plenty, then the world will be our servant; but when these pleasing waters are at ebb, men grow shy, and look upon us at a distance. Adversity is like Penelope's night, which undoes what the day had wove.—Our fortunes and ourselves are things so closely linked that we cannot always tell which of the two procures us the most regard; but when a separation takes place, the secret is discovered.—He is happy who findeth a true friend in extremity; but he is happier who findeth not extremity, whereby to try his friend.—The trial of friendship is by finding what others will do for us; but the trial of faith is by proving how he will act towards God. To trust in Providence when we have the securities in our iron chest is easy; but to depend upon God for what we cannot see is more difficult, and far more acceptable! For in this act we make confession, and acknowledg the deity.—Those who are like Peter in their boasting, will be like him in their base denial; but few will resemble him in their quick repentance. Under the pressure of severe calamity, we must either quit our hold of God or of ourselves, and then we shall see to which our souls will cleave the strongest. Of this trial, excellent is the use which we may make. If we find our faith upon the test, firm, it will be to us a perpetual banquet; if we find it wavering, knowing our weakness, we shall implore divine aid to sinew it with a stronger nerve; so that the severity of the trial may prove either the assurance of our happiness, or our guide to find it. Without this confidence in a power that is always able to aid us, we do but wander in trouble and doubt. Infidelity is often the cause of all our woes, and the ground of our erring into sin. Not trusting in God we disturb ourselves with fears and solicitudes, and to cure these we rush into prohibited paths. Can God suffer those to want, who with a dutiful endeavor depend on his goodness? It is not usual for man to act thus; and will infinite power, who grasps the universe in his hands, leave a faithful follower destitute of this world's comforts? Can the Deity be sparing of his bounty to his sons, unless he sees it for their benefit? Serve God and believe, and he will never fail thee for what is most convenient.

ANSWER TO G. W. C. CONCERNING THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST.

[*Continued from p.* 414, *and concluded.*]

In the former parts of my answer, I have attempted to prove that the names of persons, places and things must have a spiritual meaning, and also that if any part of the word have such meaning, that all

parts must have it. I shall now proceed to make the application to the subject of your immediate enquiry.

It can easily be perceived that Jehovah to become manifest in the flesh, must have descended from the very highest to the very lowest order of things. The different principles, grades or degrees, through which he descended, are signified by the names and generations recorded by Matthew. Of these there are given three general divisions, each consisting of fourteen generations. The first is from Abraham to David; the second from David until the carrying away into Babylon, and the third from the carrying away into Babylon, unto Christ. The first of these divisions represents the highest or celestial state, the next the spiritual state, and the third the natural state. To give an exact description of all the degrees and principles signified by these names and generations, would be a task not easy to be performed or understood, nor would it be consistent with the plan of this work, for it would of itself require a large volume. It is plain that there is this difference between Matthew and Luke. The former is describing the descent of the Lord and the latter, the ascent. By Jacob is signified the natural or external man; by Joseph is signified the divine principle operating in a new and peculiar way in consequence of being united with the human principle or natural man represented by Jacob. Swedenborg informs us in the A. C. 5307. "that Joseph represented the celestial of the spiritual principle from the natural, nor can it be expressed otherwise, for the celestial principle is good from the divine, the spiritual principle is truth from that good, thus it is the truth of good from his divine human principle; this the Lord was when he lived in the world, but when he glorified himself, he then transcended above it, and was made the divine good itself, or Jehovah even as to the human principle." When our Lord in his descent assumed the natural man, it was impure and unholy, but this impurity was gradually removed, during the process of rendering the human divine. It is not difficult to perceive that there must have been a great difference between the natural principle before it was purified and after.—In its former state it is called by Matthew, *Jacob*, but in its latter state it is called by Luke, *Heli*. Now as in the descent of the Lord, the divine principle operating through the natural principle called Jacob, produced the celestial of the spiritual principle called Joseph, therefore Joseph was called the son of Jacob; but after the purification of the natural principle and when the Lord was ascending from earth to heaven, he passed through the principle represented by Joseph, and through the principle from which Joseph descended, which when impure was called Jacob, but now being purified was called Heli. In consequence of which Joseph is called by Luke the son of Heli.—The more carefully this subject is examined the more beautiful it appears. And if this mode of reasoning is correct, as I fully believe it to be, we may find much satisfaction and instruction which otherwise could not be obtained, and in viewing the spiritual sense, the difficulties of the letter vanish away and are forgotten.